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March 19, 2015

NEWS RELEASE

Department Formally Ends TB Event Investigation

No babies found to have active Tuberculosis after exposure

Update 2:30 p.m. 3/19/15: After the initial dissemination of this news release, the Department of Public Health was able to confirm that seven of the 11 positive tests involved babies who were BCG-vaccinated. This brings the total true positives to four, with three of the four receiving prophylactic treatment.

EL PASO, Texas -- After a seven month investigation, the City of El Paso Department of Public Health announced today that the TB Infant Event has reached its conclusion. The following information has been compiled in order to update the media and the local community as to the results of this investigation.

Total identified patients	859*
Total identified patients contacted	850 (99%)
Active cases of TB	0
Identified patients with known completed screenings at DPH and outside DPH	766 (89%)
Number of patients eligible for prophylactic treatment	241
Number of patients who completed prophylactic treatment	14 (6%)
Total positive tests	11
Positive tests with BCG Vaccine (probable false positive)	7
Positive tests without BCG Vaccine	4
Patients residing in El Paso County	699 (81.37%)
Patients residing in New Mexico	53 (6.17%)
Patients residing outside the U.S.	79 (9.2%)
Patients residing in the U.S., but outside of El Paso County and New Mexico	28 (3.26%)

(*one patient was previously double counted)

Department officials also point out that the infection rate, based on similar scenarios investigated nationally, was expected to be 1% of those exposed. However, the infection rate in this case was less than 0.6%.

This announcement comes as the department prepares to recognize World TB Day on March 24, 2015. The tagline for the campaign is "Find TB. Treat TB. Working together to eliminate TB," and the slogan became the battle cry for those working on this particular investigation.

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Promote Transparent and Consistent Communication Among All Members of the Community

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"Our team quickly included partners from, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Texas Department of State Health Services, New Mexico Department of Health, El Paso County Office of Emergency Management, Border Regional Advisory Council/Trauma Service Area, Providence Memorial Hospital, Mexican Health Authorities in Juarez and Chihuahua, as well as officials in other parts of the world," said Robert Resendes, Public Health Director. "This experience has demonstrated that a cooperative effort among several agencies can lead to successful outcomes."

Although only 11 babies tested positive (seven babies with a BCG vaccination being likely false positives) with no active cases of TB identified, it is still important for parents and health care providers to remain attentive regarding these children's health in the future.

"There is still a two year window that exists, whereby a child who was exposed is at greater risk to develop active TB disease," said Dr. Hector Ocaranza, Health Authority. "We encourage these families to be vigilant and continue their children's care with their primary health care provider who can refer to the Department of Public Health if their physician determines additional TB testing is warranted."

Although the investigation is complete, Department officials hope this event serves as a reminder that TB still exists and continues to be a health risk to communities and individuals in Texas.

This investigation is one of the many ways the Department of Public Health helps support the City of El Paso's strategic goal to nurture and promote a healthy, sustainable community. For more information on the programs and services offered by the Department of Public Health, visit EPHealth.com or dial 211.

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